

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3782
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 107

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PGOV WB GW UR
SUBJECT: NEW GDR MEASURE BARRING FREE ENTRY INTO WEST GERMAN
REPRESENTATION IN EAST BERLIN

1. SUMMARY. STATE SECRETARY SPANGENBERG TELLS MISSIONS
THAT FRG TAKES MOST SERIOUS VIEW OF NEW GDR MEASURES BE-
GINNING JANUARY 11, BY WHICH VOPOS ARE TURNING AWAY PRIVATE
VISITORS FROM CALLING AT WEST GERMAN REPRESENTATION IN EAST
BERLIN. WHILE MEASURE PURPORTEDLY AIMS AT ENFORCING LONG
INOPERATIVE REGULATION REQUIRING EAST GERMAN CITIZENS TO
OBTAIN FONMINISTRY APPROVAL BEFORE CALLING AT FOREIGN
EMBASSIES, ITS OBVIOUS PURPOSE IS TO DISCOURAGE APPLICA-
TIONS FOR EXIT PERMITS TO FRG. SINCE IT STRIKES AT VERY
CORE OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS, SPANGENBERG ESTIMATES
REPERCUSSIONS WILL BE WIDESPREAD AND PROMPT. END SUMMARY.

2. AT LUNCHEON WITH UK MINISTER AND US AND FRENCH
POLADS ON JANUARY 11 STATE SECRETARY SPANGENBERG INFORMED
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US OF EAST GERMAN MEANSURE CONTROLLING VISITS TO FRG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATION IN SOVIET SECTOR. THE ACTION
OSTENSIBLY AIMS AT ENFORCING PROVISIONS OF A REGULATION
OR LAW FROM THE 1960'S WHICH PERMITS PRIVATE EAST
GERMAN CITIZENS TO VISIT FOREIGN MISSIONS ONLY AFTER THEY
HAVE RECEIVED PERMISSION FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.
SPANGENBERG CHARACTERIZED THE MOVE AS "HERMETICALLY"

SEALING OFF THE FRG OFFICE FROM THE PUBLIC.

3. THIS IS REPORTEDLY THE FIRST SUCH ACTION SINCE THE OPENING OF THE OFFICE. THERE WAS NO WARNING, BUT THE WEST GERMANS KNEW THAT AS OF A FEW MONTHS AGO GDR CIVILIAN AND UNIFORMED POLICE WERE INTERCEPTING OCCASIONAL VISITORS, AFTER LETTING THEM GET AS FAR AS A KILOMETER AWAY FOLLOWING EXIT FROM THE FRG OFFICE.

4. SPANGENBERG SAID THAT MOVE WAS OBVIOUSLY DIRECTED AGAINST APPLICANTS FOR EXIT PERMITS AS EFFORT TO THROTTLE BACK RISING INTEREST IN LEAVING GDR. AS SUCH IT WAS UNDOUBTED SIGN OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL WEAKNESS, DISGUISED, HOWEVER, AS HAWKSIH HOSTILITY. IT WAS AN ULTIMATE VIOLATION OF THE CSE AND WOULD QUICKLY BE SO ASSESSED BY THE EAST GERMAN POPULATION.

5. GDR REP IN EAST BERLIN GAUS WAS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE IMMEDIATE PROTEST, AND STATE MINISTER WISCHNEWSKI IN BONN, WITH WHOM SPANGENBERG HAD JUST SPOKEN, HAD CANCELLED AN UPCOMING "COURTESY CALL" ON HIMSELF BY THE EAST GERMAN REP IN BONN, AND INSTEAD WAS CALLING IN THE LATTER TO READ HIM A STRONG COMPLAINT.

6. ALL PARTICIPANTS AT LUNCH EXPRESSED CONSENSUS THAT THIS WAS NO MARGINAL HARASSMENT, BUT ONE THAT WENT TO THE VERY CORE OF THE INNER-GERMAN RELATIONSHIP. SPANGENBERG SAID THAT FRG TOOK MOST SERIOUS VIEW OF THIS STEP. TO EXTENT IT WAS BASED ON FORCING COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLA-
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TION WHICH WAS VIRTUALLY DEFUNCT BECAUSE OF LONG NON-APPLICATION, IT RAISED THE QUESTION AS TO HOW THE GDR, ONCE STARTED ON THIS PATH, COULD THEREAFTER EASILY BACK OFF OF IT. SPANGENBERG SIAD THE BLOW WAS SO CENTRAL THAT IT WOULD HAVE VERY WIDE REPERCUSSIONS INDEED. CONCEIVABLY, EVERY ASPECT OF INNER-GERMAN BUSINESS COULD BE QUICKLY AFFECTED. THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKLASH IN THE FRG WOULD QUICKLY CREATE AN UNFAVORABLE CLIMATE OF OPINION WHICH WOULD ANIMATE THE OPPOSITION, DISMAY THE COALITION, AND SERIOUSLY LIMIT POSSIBILITIES FOR DEFUSING THE PROBLEM BEHIND THE SCENES. DAVIS

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